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House of Representatives

EMERGENCY SUPPLEMENTAL FOR DEFENSE AND RECONSTRUCTION OF IRAQ AND AFGHANISTAN

HON. BOB FILNER

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

MR. FILNER: Mr. Chairman, I represent San Diego, California, a place from which thousands and thousands of our troops have been sent to the war in Iraq. My constituents' families are personally involved in this effort every day, and I say to them that those who are going to vote against this blank check for the President are thinking about their brave sons and daughters. It is we who are thinking about their safety.

This administration, with \$79 billion that we gave them, cannot equip our troops with the body armor they need to survive. We have killed dozens of soldiers. We have maimed dozens of them because they did not have that body armor. What kind of an administration would do that and then say they support the troops? We have no accountability for what they did before. We have no accountability for this \$87 billion that they are asking us to give them now. This is not what a legislative branch's duty is. A legislative branch is to

exert co-equal control, co-equal influence with the executive branch; and the only way we can do that is through the purse strings.

The gentleman before me said we have to keep going with what we are doing. Even if it is wrong, even if we have thrown in so much money, even if we have no plan to get out, let us keep going. I heard those arguments with Vietnam, and we were in a quagmire then. We are in an "Iraqmire" now. And we need to turn those troops' responsibilities over to an international body. We need to make sure that our troops come home alive. We are going to have the accountability that this body deserves only if we vote "no" on this matter. And I say to my friends, to my families in San Diego, it is time to turn this matter over to the United Nations. It is time that we internationalize this force. It is time that we bring our troops home; and we can spend that \$87 billion on education, on health, on our veterans here at home. Vote "no" on the supplemental.